

TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S NEWS

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Volume 21 Number 3

September, 2011

The Newsletter of The Texas Sportsman's Association

"Dedicated to educating the public about the need for protection, conservation and improvement of fish, game and other wildlife, grasslands, and forests and to safeguard the freedoms that enable these pursuits."

A note from the President



Welcome TSA Members:

My message for this newsletter is the same as it was in June. We continue to hope and pray for some rain. In my area of Lavaca County, there has been no measurable rainfall. I hope some of you have been fortunate enough to receive a few showers, but in my travels around our area, things are not looking good. We have an article from Bobby Eichler, TPWD Technical guidance biologist, about managing your property during the drought in this newsletter. Most ranchers in the area have already cut their herd size drastically and in July they started feeding hay.

We have had some wildlife and protein feeders going for months now and every animal in the woods is visiting them all night and early morning. I have some very interesting trail camera pictures of raccoons hanging from their hind legs to reach the feeder spinners and some shots of turkeys actually chasing pigs. Surprisingly we have some better bucks visiting the feeders with antlers much better than last year. I believe the older ones are there because of the drought, but I am happy to see several young 10-point bucks that we did not have last year. Jon Hayes and I viewed some of the pictures and he pointed out that the deer body size has been affected by the lack of natural browse.

It is time for our annual fall fundraiser on September 25 and many members and directors have already been working on this for the past three months. This year we will be at Mentz Hall again, but will be set up under the large pavilion behind the hall. All of you should have received two books of tickets in the mail. If you need more, please contact one of the members listed in this edition. We will be serving beef and sausage plates again and the cost will remain at \$7.50 per plate for adults. Children 6 to 12 will be \$4.00 and all children under 6 will eat free. Please bring the children! This annual event is our primary

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Why the TSA pays a \$10 bounty on coyotes

These pictures show loud and clear why the Texas Sportsman's Association pays a \$10 bounty on coyotes. The above photo was taken by Terry Macdonald, granddaughter of Roy Jones.

She and her husband were sitting on the pier of their tank in the woods and were at least 100 yards from the coyote. It stood long enough for her to fetch her camera out of a bag and snap the photo. Then, the coyote walked back in the woods. It did not run or drop the fawn.

A five-year study suggests that less than a quarter of white-tail fawns born in the spring survive until autumn. Coyotes kill the vast majority of the three-quarters that die, often within hours of their birth.



TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION

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Visit TSA On Line!

The TSA web site is up and running, and members are encouraged to visit:

<http://www.texassportsmansassociation.org>

The website is maintained by
TSA Director Leslie Heinsohn.

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Mitigating for the drought

By **BOBBY EICHLER**, TPWD Technical Guidance Biologist

Unless you have been out of state for the last 6-8 months, you should be very aware that we are currently in a very dry period. The Drought Monitor categorizes drought on a level from D0 (dry) to D4 (Exceptional). All of the Oak Prairie District is either on a D3 (Extreme) or D4 category with little relief in site.

The National Weather Services season outlook for the period of June 2 through Aug. 31 indicates ongoing drought with “some” improvement. As most of you natives know, “improving” drought conditions for this part of the state in July and August just does not make much sense. It is to the point that it will take a lasting tropical storm or hurricane to fill up stock tanks and replenish some soil moisture.

Since most of the members of the local wildlife management associations have an interest in white-tailed deer, I will try to discuss possible effects of the drought and ways to mitigate the drought. A very basic understanding of deer diet and the annual cycle is an important starting point. During a “normal” year, deer prefer to forage on forbs (weeds) from early spring through mid-summer. Generally, these weeds will start to play out during dry summer conditions and deer will turn more to browse (woody twigs and leaves from small bushes, trees, and vines). As the fall and winter approaches, acorns will play an important part of the diet and if there is some precipitation then winter weeds will germinate and be a large part of the diet. Normally, by late winter browse is a vital part of the diet again as acorns play out.

The main point you need to recognize in this preferred cycle is that browse is a very important category that helps get deer through the hardest of times (late summer and winter). Browse is the “potato” of the deer diet.

As you drive down the highway this fall, start paying attention to the absence of leaves on trees and along fence lines from about 5 foot and under. This absence of leaves is called a browse line. Generally speaking, a browse line is not a good thing and is normally only visible during late winter just prior to spring. Optimally, with excellent stocking rates and deer densities, you don't ever see a browse line. If you have paid attention this past 6 months, the browse line never recovered through the spring and is getting worse as the drought lingers. In this part of the world, browse lines are primarily created by two animals, deer and cattle. Simply stated, the forage that the deer will be depending on late this winter is already gone with little chance of re-growth between now and then.

So what effects might this drought have on the deer population? For starters, white-tailed fawns rely on good forage production to provide optimal cover to avoid predators. Normally, when drought conditions are present during fawning season, adequate cover is lacking and fawn survival decreases. Additionally, white-tailed does depend heavily on weed production during the spring and summer to supply vital nutrients for milk production. Weeds are very dependent on rainfall and have been absent this year.

As a result of both conditions mentioned above, fawn recruitment will likely be much lower this year than normal. Although the low fawn recruitment will not have major effects on the long term population, it will have short term impacts by reducing

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Looking Down From the Saddle

By HERMAN W. BRUNE

The school bus bounced and lurched across the low water crossing at Jimmy Zapalac's and Cecilia Tobias' houses. The leverage in the back seat pitched me into the air and made me lose my place in the library book.

Stevie Hoelscher sat across the aisle alone in the other back seat. He never lost his place in a library book. Any paper items in his charge were apt to be chewed into spit wads. Between him and the rest of the country boys — Keith Schobel, Curtis Vasut, Kenny Noska, Eddie Gaetner, and Ronnie Polasek — there was a consolidated vigil for whitetail bucks as we endured the morning route through Shaws Bend, Cullen Ranch and the Sanna Anna riverbottom.

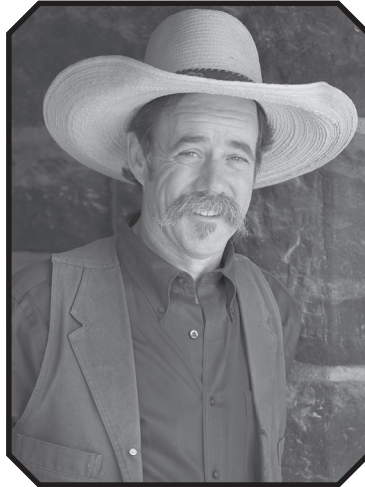
Besides the "there's one!" shouts that interrupted my academic concentration, a wary scholar read with one eye in his book and the other on his fellow passengers. My compadres could shoot acorns from rubber bands at .22 velocities. An unsuspecting victim was the best. The little kids took cover when the oak nugget wars erupted, and the older girls glared at us, gabbing out their ultimatums for accidental hits. There was also the possibility that without provocation, Hoelscher would dive across the aisle to thump on me just to get my attention.

However, it would be wrong to insinuate that I was an innocent cast in with a lot of ruffians. My intolerance for serenity was punctuated by my proclivity to bludgeon a dozing comrade with a geography book. Sometimes my attacks ignited the aforementioned battles.

The roughhousing was a pecking order exercise. Every aspect of society was mirrored on the bus. Hoelscher and I ruled from the back seats. Awkward high school boys occupied the last six seats. In front of them were the high school girls, then the junior high kids, and finally the elementary children were up front. We were toe-headed German and Czech pupils with last names that had echoed through the riverbottoms since Texas was a Republic.

Our parents were the foundations of the community — bankers, realtors, nurses, gravel pit hands, carpenters, farmers and housewives. It didn't matter if your daddy wore a necktie or a welding hood; we all bought our clothes from Gindlers, Charlie Walla's Store or the Sears catalog. Every boy and girl knew how to hunt chicken eggs, pick peas in the garden, and sic the dog on an armadillo. We grew up eating wild game, pasture-raised beef and fish from the river and ponds. Most of our grandparents were still alive and spoke second languages while demonstrating the lifestyle that survived the Great Depression. We were awed by the sounds, smells, and warmth of the wood frame family homeplaces that needed paint. Wooden picket fences, barns filled with decaying harnesses, and helping Grandma make cookies from scratch would be the memories of our childhood.

The unfortunate part was that we had to grow up. Hoelscher and I fought maturity as long as we could. Any good sense was unnoticeable because of our backwoods humor. Nevertheless, it was oddly coupled with a demand for the truth. Tales of illegally taken fish and game and ill-gotten gains from under-the-table



backroom bargaining flirted with our curiosity. It was becoming evident that the world was growing smaller. Maybe a few good-old-boy traditions would need to be forsaken, but not before we knew how everything worked.

When I went to college, Hoelscher explored the academia of hoop nets, spotlighting, hunting out of season and going over the limit. He was also an expert at manipulating the Bohemian grapevine. Before long, he had an unwarranted reputation that brought him hours of tongue-in-cheek mirth. He became a master of the understatement as well as exaggeration. For logical reasons, no game warden

ever ticketed him for any game violations. Yet, mention his name and locals howl about the unrepentant unpunished poacher. None howl or laugh as hard as Hoelscher.

When the headlines read that our state representative illegally stocked ponds with fish from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Hoelscher was outraged.

"Who does he think he is? Stealing fish is my gig. He can't come into my county and get top billing."

We all smirked and watched as the rep parlayed into a career as a lobbyist, and made more money than ever.

Time marched on and age crept toward us. Then on a cold night in Hoelscher's smokehouse, we were delivered another of life's stark lessons. I was tying sausage while Hoelscher stuffed. Several of our buddies were de-boning while others fired up the wood stove and hung sausage. Then a man who moved into our county and was adopted as a friend regurgitated what he'd been trained to say by local river authority officials: "If you dumb farmers knew what was good for y'all, you'd sell out and let them build a dam on the river below Shaws Bend. You might lose your land, but it would be better for the community. You dumb farmers need somebody to take care of y'all."

Hoelscher and I stopped and looked at each other. Then we stared at our friend who had gone back to his chore as if he had commented on the weather. I glanced around the room and somebody remarked that we needed more deer meat. Hoelscher mopped his brow, sighed, and went back to making sausage.

After the crew went home, Hoelscher and I visited.

"Hoelscher, there's two kinds of people in this world. Some think they're the smartest and need to rule over everyone else; and some think the world is a better place if everybody works together," I said. "People are people, rural or urban, everyone deserves mutual respect. It gripes my butt when a public servant wants to lord over folks."

"Yeah," said Hoelscher. "Our little buddy has been running with the wrong crowd. Hey, look! I found a new battery for my spotlight!"

Send us your pictures and articles

Texas Sportsman Assn. members are encouraged to submit stories and/or photos for the Newsletter. Submissions may be mailed to Texas Sportsmans Association, P.O. Box 26, Columbus, TX 78934, or email editor@industryinet.com.

Alleman scores turkey grand slam

Congratulations to TSA member Steve Alleman, who completed the National Wild Turkey Federation Grand Slam this season by harvesting an Eastern, Florida, Merriam's, and Rio Grande Gobblers.

In the last issue Steve had submitted his Lavaca County Rio Grande gobbler for official ranking for bow harvest. The bird taken April 27, on the William Gohlke property was officially ranked #3 all time Bow harvest in Texas, with a score of 121.0625.

The Eastern was harvested Mar 18, 2011 in JASPER, SC, USA. Score 63.75.

The Florida was harvested Mar 20, 2011 FLAGLER, FL, USA. Score 76.50.

The Merriam's was harvested May 21, 2011 KEYA PAHA, NE, USA. Score 51.8750.

Anyone who has ever really hunted turkeys knows that that is a lot of hunting type work and turkey talking as these birds are not easy to fool!

Steve will be at the Sept. 25 Fall Fundraiser, if anyone has any questions about turkey hunting.

TSA's Austin Co. Unit to meet Sept. 13 at Cat Spring Ag. Hall

It's been so hot and dry so far this year that Christmas might sound good to us. Maybe (let's hope) it will be wet and cooler.

The Austin County Unit of TSA will meet on Sept. 13 at the Cat Spring Ag. Society Hall.

The Social that everybody looks forward to kicks off at 7 p.m. with the business meeting to follow.

Plans for the Variety Shoot on Oct. 23 and the Christmas Party scheduled for Dec. 4 are to be finalized.

Pack up your goodies and join the crew for food, fellowship and business.

Check in your buck, win great prizes!

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is collecting age and antler measurement information from bucks harvested within Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington Counties. The harvest information will be used to evaluate the antler restriction regulations.

Please take time to check your buck in at one of the convenient locations in your county. By checking in your LEGAL buck, you will automatically be entered into a drawing at the end of the 2011-12 season for any one of the valuable prizes. Bucks harvested on ranches receiving level 2 or level 3 Managed Land Deer Permits are not eligible.

Check stations will be set up in all of these counties. TSA is donating a Lifetime Hunting or Fishing License as one of the prizes.

Advertise in the TSA Newsletter!

Texas Sportsmen's Association members receive the TSA Newsletter quarterly. They're all interested in the outdoors, and can provide advertisers with a targeted group of active, involved consumers!

ADVERTISING RATES:

Full Page — \$225 (7.5 inches wide X 10 inches tall)

Half Page — \$120

(7.5 inches wide X 5 inches tall or 3.75 inches wide X 10 inches tall)

1/4 Page — \$55 (3.75 inches wide X 5 inches tall)

Business Card size — \$25

(Other ad sizes — \$5.50 per column inch)

ADS RUN MORE THAN ONE TIME

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Classified Word Ads — 20 cents per word

TWA elects new president at 2011 convention in S.A.

Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) leaders and members elected a new President among its four officers for the coming year, as well as a new group of directors, as part of the organization's 2011 Wildlife convention in San Antonio, July 7-10.

Glen Webb of Abilene was elected president of the TWA on July 8. He was elected to a one-year term by a unanimous vote by members of the TWA board at the Joint Membership and Directors Meeting.

Webb succeeds Tina Y. Buford of Harlingen, who served as TWA president for two one-year terms. The board also re-elected Neal Wilkins, Ph.D., of College Station as vice president and elected Greg Simons of San Angelo as secretary and Marcus T. Barrett IV of San Antonio as treasurer. TWA members elected 52 individuals to the organization's board of directors for a three-year term.

Webb is the 14th president in the organization's 26-year history. He previously served as treasurer for two years and as secretary for two years.

"Today you have heard my

story. Over the last 10 years, I have heard your story. I believe in your story, and I believe in you!" Webb told TWA members and supporters during his president's address on July 9. "To represent you as the president of this organization is a true honor. Therefore, please know: I realize I have been given a great gift. I recognize my covenant, and I promise I will be a good steward."

Webb was born and raised in Abilene. His education includes a Bachelor of Arts from Texas A&M University, a Master's of Business Administration from Texas Tech University, and a law degree from Southern Methodist University.

He is the owner of Glen Webb, PC, a law firm in Abilene and Albany Abstract, a Real Estate and Title Company in Albany, Tex.

Along with his mother, Becky, and brother, Russell, Webb owns 2 Diamond W Ranches, the family ranch in Throckmorton County. 2 Diamond W Ranches is a cow/calf and hunting operation and has hosted nine Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) hunts.

**Don't forget the FALL FUNDRAISER!
Sunday, September 25 at Mentz Hall**



AWARD WINNING RANCH — A Country Life Ranch in Cat Spring won the 2011 Lone Star Land Steward Award for this part of the state. From left are Ralph Duggins, commissioner of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department; Hunter Dietzmann, Cary Dietzmann and Carter P. Smith, executive director of Texas Parks & Wildlife.

Dietzmann's Cat Spring ranch Land Steward Award winner

Native habitat restoration and enhancement for the benefit of wildlife is a common thread among the recipients of this year's Lone Star Land Steward Awards.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Sand County Foundation are recognizing these model land stewards and others, who have shown exemplary efforts to manage their property as ambassadors of conservation.

This year's winner for the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion is A Country Life Ranch of Cat Spring, owned and operated by Cary Dietzmann.

Using the land as an active educational tool to break down barriers between traditional ag producers and new suburban landowners, the Cary Dietzmann family's vision is to improve plant and animal diversity while also enhancing recreational enjoyment.

Practices such as rotational grazing, invasive species control, pre-

scribed burning, strip disking, and wetland/riparian zone enhancement are used to accomplish these goals.

Deer are managed cooperatively with neighboring landowners and bird diversity is enhanced using supplemental nest structures and water features.

The annual Lone Star Land Steward Awards recognize and honor private landowners for their accomplishments in habitat management and wildlife conservation. The program is designed to educate landowners and the public and to encourage participation in habitat conservation.

Some of the program objectives include recognizing private landowners for excellence in habitat management and wildlife conservation on their lands, publicizing the best examples of sound natural resource management practices and encouraging youth education and participation in promoting responsible habitat management.

Aaron Weishuhn attends range workshop in June at Junction

Aaron Weishuhn is attending the 2011 Youth Range Workshop at the Texas Tech University Center-Junction this week, June 19-24.

County selection of participants involved in 4-H and FFA programs was based on outstanding projects, leadership and interest in range and natural resource management.

Aaron's local sponsor is Texas Master Naturalist Society, Gideon Lincecum Chapter, a strong supporter of range education and leadership development of local youth.

Aaron attends Colum-

bus High School and is the son of James and Barbara Weishuhn.

The weeklong Youth Range Workshop is held annually to recognize outstanding Texas youth and to provide them with an opportunity for complimentary training in range and natural resource management, stewardship and leadership. Field trips for hands-on training will be to Mason and Menard County ranches, the Kerr Wildlife Management Area, Texas Tech University Center Lands and the South Llano River State Park.



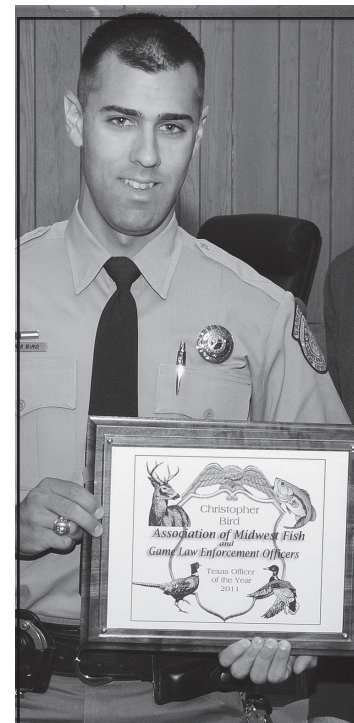
COLORADO COUNTY 4-H member Aaron Weishuhn attended the 2011 Youth Range Workshop in Junction this June.

Muzzleloader

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does, because your unused permits are still valid during this season.

Muzzleloader season will run from Jan. 2-15 this season. You might think about getting yourself a new toy and practice in anticipation of another fun way to hunt. If you can't wait till the muzzleloader season opens, you don't have to. It is legal to use your muzzleloader during the regular gun season. Obviously during the muzzleloader only season, you are limited to utilizing only a muzzleloader.



Wharton Co. officer named GW of Year

Chris Bird, a state game warden based in Wharton County, has been named Officer of the Year by the Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers.

A game warden for six years, Bird has been stationed in Wharton County all of that time. TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith presented Bird the award at the Aug. 25 meeting of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission.

"Warden Bird has consistently demonstrated a very strong degree of professionalism and dedication to mission, continually excelling in the high standards we expect from all our officers," Smith said. "He is the epitome of what we hope the public envisions a Texas game warden."

Smith noted that
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Buckskin Brigades fun, educational for Charlie Neuendorff

My name is Charlie Neuendorff and I attended the South Texas Buckskin Brigades camp this summer, an intensive wildlife camp, which included team building, technology, wildlife education, and leadership. Our camp experience included habitat and eco-system management taught by some of the state's leading biologists.

The camp was held at the Southern Star Ranch, a 13,000-acre ranch outside of Uvalde. This five-day camp focused on the white-tail deer. We arrived at the ranch and were assigned a cabin, a "herd," herd-leader and assistant leader, and we immediately started working. We were introduced to the ranch manager who had harvested a doe for educational purposes, which is legal and requires a permit.

We learned about a white-tail deer inside and out. Using a doe that was opened to demonstrate how the internal organs worked, we were taught about the scent glands and the basic anatomy of a deer.

The information that we received upon our arrival became invaluable as we continued learning about white-tail deer. We were taught about plants and what deer prefer to eat. There are different classes of plants from forbs to woodies. In the drought conditions we are experiencing, deer resort to eating a third class food such as the leaves from a mesquite tree.

We were taught about the essential balance of a deer-to-land ratio or caring capacity. If the caring capacity is over what the land can sustain during a drought then the deer population will compete for food and water. This over-population,



especially in extreme weather conditions, can result in starvation, dehydration and disease, which is why it is more ethical to harvest deer.

Throughout the five days at camp, the different herds competed against one another, creating a fun, "friendly" rivalry for which we received points. These points determined whether or not you would win a free hunt in the fall. These competitions promoted critical thinking and teamwork. We shot at targets, had a marching competition, spot-lighting competition, and rattling competition. We were taught how to age teeth and score antlers using a Boone & Crockett scale. Although this was not a "hunting" camp, we were taught fire-arm safety, shooting and bow


hunting skills.

The Texas Brigades camp is actually a leadership camp disguised as a deer camp. Texas needs youth to be environmentally aware of the importance of water quality and watersheds; ranch management and stewardship of our land. In this camp we were given the opportunity to create informational tri-folds and to develop our public speaking skills, while promoting these ethics. Learning and presenting information builds self-confidence and enables you to stand in front of any group with self-assurance. We were each given a "silver bullet," which was a quotation to memorize, interpret, and present.

Our mission, as cadets of this camp, is to be Ambassadors for Conservation. In order for me to go back to this camp as an assistant leader I must inform the public and encourage others to attend. This camp is for girls, as well as boys from the ages of 13-17. As I work to educate the public about the Texas Brigades, I also am earning my way back to camp the next year as an Assistant Leader and then a Special Agent. With this effort comes the reward of college scholarships, fishing and hunting trips!

There are three Texas Brigades Camps to choose from: Buckskin Brigade, Bobwhite Brigade, and Bass Brigade. Last year I attended the South Texas Bobwhite Brigades camp and went back in June, this year, as an Assistant Covey Leader. The camps have made me confident of not only my speaking skills, but also confident to confront new situations and

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Texas Sportsman's FALL FUNDRAISER



Sunday, Sept. 25, 2011
St Rochs Parish Hall – Mentz, TX
11:30 a.m. – until (No Admittance Charge)

Noon Catered BBQ Meal
Served from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm
Adults - \$7.50 per plate
Children - 6 – 12 \$4.00 Children under 6 - free



Raffle prizes include: Savage 116-243, Mossberg Silver Reserve 20 ga,
Weatherby Vanguard 270, Crossbow, Remington 870 Express 12 ga,
Savage 93 17 HMR, Hand-made Quilt, Rod & Reel Combo, many gift cards and more

For Raffle tickets contact any TSA Member or the following:

For information on the Texas Sportsman's Association contact

David Gohlke, President, at (979) 234-2860

Douglas Lilie, Treasurer, at (979) 732-2954

Ginger Friemel, Secretary, at (979) 968-6376

www.texassportsmansassociation.org

Buckskin Brigade

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challenges. I have made wonderful friends that I continue to stay in touch with. I have been given opportunities to speak and present my story at different events across Texas, some that I would never have even known about. It is the ultimate social network for youth; as we work together to spread the word for conservation awareness. These camps have not only changed my way of thinking, they have changed my life.

Texas Brigades is possible because of the gracious donations made

by Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Wildlife Association, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and private donations. It is also made possible because of the exclusive access we have been given to private ranches which we then use as environmental labs. All the leaders, cooks, and educators work on a voluntary basis, giving a week of their summer to provide the best for each member of camp. If you have further questions, please feel free to call me at 979-

250-3934 or for more information and for application materials, go to www.texasbrigades.org or call 1-800-TEX-WILD.

Take advantage of muzzleloader this year

By GREG PLEASANT

TPWD Wildlife Biologist, Giddings

Have you considered hunting with a muzzleloader? Back in 2009 Texas Parks and Wildlife opened a 14-day youth season at the end of the general rifle season. There was also a 14-day muzzleloader season added at this same time.

This represents an opportunity for some adults to gain additional hunting and outdoor enjoyment with their children or other family/friends. It certainly offers additional hunting opportunity and a new experience.

Modern inline muzzleloaders are a lot easier to load, shoot and clean

than the "old" style muzzleloaders. Additionally, they are surprisingly accurate and can be quite inexpensive. Most of today's inline models use a shotgun primer and can be shot with either pelletized or loose powder, round balls or sabot type bullets. A good shot can expect to achieve at least a 3 inch group at 100 yards with open sights. Practice is a key, and there are safety considerations that are unique to muzzleloaders.

Modern muzzleloaders can be very effective on deer and pigs. If you receive MLD doe permits on your property, the muzzleloader season can also lengthen your time for removing

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A Note from the Biologist ...

(This article appeared in the Oak Prairie Wildlife Management Association Newsletter.)

Once again the summer has arrived and with that we begin to look forward again to another white-tailed deer hunting season in Lavaca County. This is a fun time of year but also a busy one for us at Texas Parks and Wildlife, and for me in particular given the interest the people in this area show in regard to their white-tailed deer management efforts.

One of the parts of this job that I enjoy the most is going out and talking deer with folks, looking at what people are harvesting, and helping folks manage the wildlife habitat on their property. So please feel free to get in touch with me if you have questions or concerns about our deer populations here in Lavaca County or if you just want to brag a little about that trophy buck you're seeing.

On another note, Chris Janak with NRCS, our local Extension Agent Shannon Deforest and I recently hosted a prescribed burning workshop here in Lavaca County. We were very pleased to get such a great turnout and see how many landowners in the county are interested in utilizing this extremely effective tool in their range and wildlife management efforts.

Building on the interest shown in this workshop, we are going to begin maintaining a list of landowners that are interested in gaining prescribed burning experience and or burning on their own property. People on the list will be contacted when a burn is being conducted that they can participate in and they will be able to let folks on the list know when they are planning on conducting a burn on their own property.

If you are interested please let me know and we will include your name and info.

— Jon Hayes

REPORT GAME VIOLATIONS:

1-800-792-GAME

Mitigating for the drought

(Continued from Page 2)

the number of animals in this year's age class. This will likely result in a noticeable decrease in the number of mature bucks 3-4 years down the road due to poor recruitment this year. This isn't necessarily a bad thing — deer populations across the majority of the Oak Prairie District have been increasing for the past decade plus and some areas have way too many deer.

From a hunter's standpoint, this year's harvest will likely increase. Deer tend to be more easily encountered at feeders during drought years, particularly if the acorn crop is lacking. However, antler quality will suffer. Because this dry period began last fall, that good vegetation (forbs/weeds) that the bucks needed in the late winter/spring (and throughout the antler growing season) to maximize antler production has been lacking or non-existent.

Drought is a natural part of the weather systems in Texas and deer have managed to get through droughts ever since they have been around. As wildlife managers though, there are methods we can use to mitigate the impacts of the drought. Here are a few:

If you graze cattle and a portion of your property is wooded, try to keep the cattle out of the woods. Typically ranchers allow the cattle to "clean out" the woods for aesthetic reasons. As implied earlier, cattle turn to browsing when conditions are unfavorable. By removing this added competition, deer will have a better chance of maintaining some of their body condition through the drought.

Feeding protein throughout the summer (and winter if drought persists) will also benefit the deer herd. Protein should be looked at as a supplement to help get deer through the drought and should never replace good habitat practices. Feeding protein during these extreme conditions can become costly and may not be a practice for everyone.

The overall health of the herd will also benefit by harvesting deer early in the season and using all of your antlerless permits. Many people feel that they should reduce harvesting during drought cycles to mitigate for lower fawn recruitment. This is not a good practice unless you are drastically below carrying capacity.

Great effort should be placed on removing excess deer early (October and November) so that the surviving herd has plenty of resources throughout the winter. Also, this is not the year to only use 1/3 to 1/2 of your deer permits. Use them all. Permit issuance is based on estimated population and trying to maintain the population within carrying capacity.

Now-a-days hunters have plenty of opportunity to harvest the antlerless portion of the population (especially if you have antlerless permits). Just to name a few: October archery season (you do not need MLD permits to harvest doe during this season), early youth season, the regular gun season, muzzleloader season, and late youth season.

As a landowner you have the opportunity to allow someone to help harvest deer on your property by hunting from Oct. 1 until Jan. 15. Please take advantage of all the different seasons that you have as a landowner or hunter. This year's harvest is very important to reduce the overall population.

After all, there is no guarantee it will rain next spring — remember the spring of 2009?

President's Message

(Continued from Page 1)

fund raiser with some proceeds earmarked to be used to sponsor our youth in their education and outdoor activities.

We have some very loyal and dedicated sponsors who we really appreciate! Their donations and discounts to our organization allow us to continue this annual event. We will have a complete list of all the sponsors in our next edition. You may see some of them listed on the raffle ticket books, so please go by and tell them thanks for their support.

We will have Douglas Mason as a speaker this year and he will be talking about wild feral hogs. There should be a lot of interest and energy around this topic. As I mentioned previously, some unusual activities around the protein feeders pertain to hogs. Well, one very large boar was tall enough to actually eat out of the feeder! After it was empty for a couple of days, he and his buddies turned it over. This happened multiple times. Yes, I will be listening to what Mr. Mason has to say.

Mr. Herman Brune has taken over the monumental task of putting the TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S NEWS together. The June edition was his first effort and he did a fine job! We are trying to secure paid advertisements for the newsletter to help offset the cost. If anyone is interested, please contact the editor or Mr. Brune. Trial ads were published in our last issue. Our advertising rates will be included in each newsletter.

The directors will meet again on September 14, at 7 p.m. at the Columbus EMS building, to finalize the plan for the September 25 fundraiser.

Hope to see you all there and bring some new members with you and remember to keep doing your rain dance!

David Gohlke

Warden

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Bird has become a core member of the warden team that works the four counties in his district, setting an excellent example of teamwork, investigative skills, work ethic and attitude.

Among the events Bird has been involved with are the "Hunt for Heroes" and "Wounded Warriors Weekend," which are hunts and fishing trips for disabled or wounded military personnel; the Wharton County Youth Hunt; the Wharton Boys and Girls Club Kidfish; the Victoria Boulevard Lion's Club Kidfish; and the Wharton County Youth Hunter Education program.

TSA welcomes new members

The Texas Sportsman's Association welcomes new memberships.

Dues are only \$5 per year, and memberships run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year except for lifetime memberships. All TSA memberships expire on Dec. 31 each year.

Simply cut out the application form on at the bottom of page six, enclose the fee, address an envelope to TSA, P.O. Box 26, Columbus, TX 78934, stamp it and put it in the mail! You may also sign up online at:

<http://www.texassportsmansassociation.org>.